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CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

A Christian Journal of Opinion

The Gravity of Our Contest with Communism

The somber revelations of the Vienna summit conference show that neither side conceded anything in its former positions. The endless and fruitless Geneva conferences have solved neither the problem of attaining a thoroughly neutralist government in Laos nor that of arriving at test-ban agreements, and it is consequently inevitable that both sides will resume testing. Finally, Adlai Stevenson's sober reports on Latin America reveal our loss of prestige after the Cuban fiasco and the dismal prospects for achieving democratic health in most of the nations of the Southern Hemisphere because of the impossibility of adapting democratic institutions to the essentially feudal economies of the whole hemisphere. All these dismal events and reports should finally convince a complacent nation and a complacent Western civilization that we are in for a hard and arduous struggle in our contest with communism.

Communism may not be so simply the "wave of the future" as Mr. Khrushchev affects to, and probably does, believe. But neither is what we simply define as the cause of "freedom," nor is this really unique achievement of Western civilization a simple exportable political value. One must define our cause as that of the open society that has been made viable by the tortuous process of making political freedom compatible with national stability and economic justice in an industrial age. If we

regard democratic institutions as simply immediate alternatives to communism in such pastoral economies as that of Laos or in corrupt forms of feudalism as in Latin America, we betray a more utopian Messianism than communism itself.

Perhaps we have all failed to measure the gravity of our contest with communism. Our belief that the Russians would finally concede the validity of our demand that test bans and nuclear disarmament would be possible only with an adequate inspection system may have been but one aspect of our complacency. The Russian intransigence does not prove that they are spoiling for a nuclear holocaust. It may, however, reveal that they are so sure of holding an advantage over us in the global struggle in both military and political terms that they need not make concessions. Also, it is probable that they have become more stubborn at the behest of their Chinese ally, who seems to have no scruples about a nuclear war and who, in any event, embodies Communist fanaticism to a degree that makes the Russians appear as pale bourgeoisie by comparison.

Meanwhile, a considerable part of the American public still believes that Chinese communism is merely the fruit of grievous mistakes in our State Department and not the consequence of that peculiar combination of national pride and social radicalism that achieves a dynamic and demonic

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form in a revolutionary situation. We have not even come to terms with the fact that we have kept China out of the United Nations merely by asking our allies to help us postpone the issue another year. This policy is subject to the law of diminishing returns.

If we review the gravity of the world situation and the inability and failure of the Western world to measure the handicaps and hazards we face in our contest with communism, we are inclined to believe that the hidden dogmas and presuppositions of the "free world" are as blinding to the eyes as the more explicit dogmas of communism.

The unappreciated hazards in our contest with communism have a common root, which can be briefly stated: the nations of the "uncommitted world" have either primitive or feudal-agrarian economies. Feudalism, as we see it in Latin America for instance, manifests a striking social inequality. Mr. Stevenson reported that in the Southern Hemisphere the rich are still getting richer and the poor are getting poorer. When technics are introduced into such an economy, they serve to aggravate rather than mitigate the inequalities.

In short, the economies of the world that are not under the influence of Western institutions have a striking similarity to early European industrialism, the social injustices of which first sparked the Marxist rebellion and made the Marxist dogma and political apocalypse credible or plausible. It will be plausible to the peoples of the new nations unless the advanced Western nations are able to use their strength to help the new nations change their feudal economic patterns, even though they do not possess the intricate balance of social forces that finally made democratic freedom compatible with the collective realities of an industrial civilization in the West.

This is a large order. Its dimension is not fully defined by the current phrases of "foreign aid" or "raising living standards." We must, indeed, help the new nations to achieve technical competence. But the more difficult problem is to achieve social justice under the dynamic conditions of technical civilization. The Communists simply thrive on the social havoc resulting from failure to achieve a tolerable justice. We have the more difficult problem of preventing the havoc.

This problem of social and political engineering is the primary prerequisite of the survival of free-

dom as we know it in Western civilization. Of course we must not neglect our military defenses. Yet if we allow the military task to preoccupy us or to deflect us from the primary problem, communism will appear to the new nations to be the "wave of the future" that Mr. Khrushchev declares it to be.

R. N.

A WELCOME PROTEST

WE WELCOME the protest by the officers of the National Council of Churches (NCC) against the bottling up of the Administration's bill for Federal aid to education in the House Rules Committee. There is no question about the tactics of some Roman Catholic leaders, about their making common cause with conservative opponents of all Federal aid to education in opposing the bill unless a bill providing for loans for parochial schools is approved. This is a crude power play; indeed, it has the effect of blackmail.

Two Roman Catholics on the committee are saying to the nation, "No Federal aid to education unless a bill aiding parochial schools is first approved." In view of the crying need for improvement of the public schools, improvement that in practical terms is not possible on an adequate scale with existing local tax structures, except through Federal action, this tactic is unworthy of the Roman Catholic leaders who use it. We know at first hand that many Roman Catholics are as much opposed to this tactic as are the non-Catholic critics.

This same statement by the NCC officers announced a plan for a four-year study by the Protestant churches of the problem of church and state. It is to be hoped that this study will not be a mere reiteration of familiar positions, as though we know all that needs to be known about the meaning of "separation." As we have often said in this journal, there are new problems that cannot be illumined by old slogans.

It is important to include the parochial school children in our national educational purpose and not to use arguments based upon the separation of church and state to oppose every effort to find ways of improving those aspects of their education that depend upon quite non-religious equip-

ment. Perhaps the issue will come to be whether or not any educational advantages provided for children in parochial schools by the state must be under the auspices of the public school. Some of the most absolutistic interpreters of "separation" are willing to make concessions on that basis, allowing the children to have connection with both systems of schools.

It is also important to find out what are permissible forms of public aid to institutions of higher education related to churches. To give aid to non-church private colleges but not to church-related colleges is to punish and perhaps destroy the colleges that have this religious tie. The reasons why higher education must be dealt with differently from the way in which the state deals with secondary education need to be spelled out.

There are questions here with no known answers. The National Council is to be commended for raising these questions and for encouraging fresh discussion of them.

J. C. B.

THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY

ON JULY 2, 1961, Ernest Hemingway was killed by a gun held in his own hand. So ended the life of America's most widely read literary master, an idol of the public and a model for countless younger writers.

Whether this death was an accident, no one seems to know. But even if it was, it was one of those accidents, like the automobile wreck that vanquished Camus a year-and-a-half ago, that cannot appear quite accidental, so fraught are they with irony. Ernest Hemingway's death could have appeared accidental only if it had come when he was past ninety years, lying quietly in bed. With any element of violence or haste it must appear either a rendezvous with destiny or the fulfillment of a life in which the risk of death was essential.

The moral function of Hemingway in this overly civilized age (if technology can be regarded as civilizing) was to draw his readers toward the borders of life. We dwell far from the frontier amid the complacencies of organization. Hemingway sought the frontier, finding it in the wars of Europe, among the expatriates of Paris, in the Spanish bull ring, in the jungles of Africa, and on the sea. His elemental genius taught him early that the true frontier is where life encounters death, far out on the limb of existence, and all the exotic locales of his stories are for most readers

symbols of the meeting of life with death that no man, however safe, can escape. "Never send to know for whom the bell tolls. . . ." Hemingway, whose literary style was so laboriously forged to render the surface of life precisely, was a constant witness to the depth of life, in so far as that depth can be made known by the presence of death.

Like Camus, Hemingway was a modern Stoic. If today one can find almost nowhere the philosophy of ancient Stoicism with its belief in reason and natural law, one finds almost everywhere the ethic of Stoicism with its twin virtues of resignation and courage. It is the legacy of Romanticism, which was attracted by death, fired in the kilns of 20th-century brutality. Camus had a more philosophical turn of mind than Hemingway and was more humane, in the sense that he held the humanist tradition in high esteem and reflected it in his involvement in politics. Hemingway was more romantic, though he possessed a style of nearly Homeric lucidity. He had no philosophy of the Absurd, but he lived and wrote "further out" than Camus. His Homeric theme was man against death. In his eyes it was no moral defeat that death is a foe who can, after all, endure a little longer than man, for the victory lies not in the endurance but in the will to endure.

Did the will to endure finally collapse in Ernest Hemingway? That is a question we shall not be allowed to answer, no matter what the coroner's report may say. But we can, with no disparagement of Hemingway the writer, remind ourselves that Stoicism, old or new, is a bulwark of the human will raised against tides of despair. Its attraction is a measure of the anguish of an age. It is a way of dealing with death in the absence of Grace, though, sometimes it grows a gracefulness of its own. Denying a transcendent source of Grace, it is at fundamental odds with Christian faith.

And yet—what a discipline for Christians is contained in that embarrassing "and yet"—we respond as humans with admiration for the courage of the Stoic. It is a reminder that the Grace of the Eucharist may become the complacency of the Eucharist. Hearing of the end of Hemingway, we are made aware that the human and the godly are by no means resolved in us. By faith Abraham went out, but did he not go by courage also? Does faith cast out courage? Does courage cast out faith? This is the question Hemingway poses to the Christian, and the answer, if we do not falsify, is seen through a glass darkly.

T. F. D.

The Unintended Virtues of an Open Society

REINHOLD NIEBUHR

IF THE political evils of communism—its monopoly of power and its imperial ambitions under the guise of anti-imperialism—are but the products and by-products of a more basic error, the political system of an open society—particularly a government that exists by the authority derived from the consent of the governed—leads to unintended virtues that transcend the mere political organization of society and reach into the very interpretation of the character of human history.

The basic error or evil of communism consists of the dogmatic system, derived from a religious apocalypse, into which the Communist power tries to coerce the whole of the historical process, with all of its divergent and contradictory vitalities. The ultimate virtue of an open society is not merely the political system of self-government, a government "of the people, by the people and for the people," though that is its immediate virtue. The political virtue of a free society is that it makes power responsible, disperses power into as many centers as possible, thereby creating a system of checks and balances, and refuses immunity from criticism and review to any center of power and prestige.

The more ultimate virtue of an open society is that it does not coerce either the community or the total process of history into a dogmatic mold. History flows through the alternations of government in an open society, taking courses that not even the most prescient leaders of the political party conflict could have foreseen. This is its ultimate virtue because this characteristic of an open society conforms to the nature of man as both creature and creator of history.

Free and Bound

If man were not free to create, to foresee the future and to plan for it, there would be no history at all. There would be only the endless recurrences of nature, with each event determined by natural necessity. If men were not bound to time and

space, and thus tempted by an ineluctable fate to read and seek to determine their future destiny in the light of their parochial perspectives, history might be, or might have been, as the 18th century imagined it—a gradual ascent to universal rationality and universal community, the ascent being determined by man's progressive achievement of freedom over natural necessity.

But man happens to be both free and bound, and this fact determines the whole character of human history, with its warring creeds and prejudices, with its slow adjustment of the "eternal truths" of one generation to the necessities of a new age. History is even more determined by the inclination of some men, whether they be "divinely appointed" rulers, popes or commissars, or perhaps merely Hegelian or Comtean philosophers, to claim immunity from the partial and parochial perspectives of the ordinary man and to conceive pretentious and ostensibly omniscient schemes for charting the future course of human history. The Communist apocalypse is such a scheme. It is more dangerous than the other schemes projected in the history of civilization because it embodies a system of pretended political omnipotence to correspond to the pretension of omniscience.

An open society is generally and rightly prized by men chiefly as a political organization—as a method of "self-government," as a form of self-limiting government that does not claim the total loyalty of the human soul and does not equate the political process with the ultimate ends of human existence or the political community with the final fulfillment of life's purposes and ambitions.

But there is a legitimate appreciation of an even more ultimate virtue of an open society. It is a method of organizing the human community in terms that are consonant with the basic character of human experience, with its freedom over and limitation by the temporal process, which is at once the ground and the dynamic of the drama of human history.

This ultimate virtue transcends the political virtue of making governments possible in which no group can claim a monopoly of power and no center of power and prestige is immune to criticism and review. It is a virtue that may deter-

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mine the whole character of human history and, having saved men from the pretensions of omniscience and omnipotence of traditional societies, is not able to protect them from the pretensions of the new revolutionary forms of political absolutism and secular religious idolatry.

"a political experience of tolerance"

This ultimate virtue, as distinguished from the more immediately discernible political virtues of providing a form of community that does not exact the price of despotism for the boon of order, is not the fruit of an explicit philosophy of life and politics. It is rather the consequence of a slow accretion of experiences that have taught men more modesty in assessing their virtue and their wisdom than they are inclined to achieve by conscious philosophies.

This ultimate virtue must begin in a political experience of tolerance. A free society refrains from suppressing any opinion not immediately perilous to the community, no matter how wrong-headed it may seem. It also refrains from suppressing political opposition to an established government, so long as that opposition is not dangerous to the order of the community. Such toleration—which incidentally, despite its early champions, was achieved only after history proved that the critics of a particular government were not necessarily the enemies of the community—is based upon a modesty on the part of the political group that momentarily possesses the political power.

This modesty is also beyond the conscious achievement of man; it is achieved and expressed inadvertently. The ruling group does not declare, but gradually comes to assume, that its conceptions of truth and justice are not as absolute or as immune to criticism as it pretends in the polemics of party strife. It holds to its conceptions of justice tenaciously enough to organize society, but not so tenaciously as to suppress other groups who have different, and perhaps contrasting, conceptions of truth and justice.

This acquired modesty prevents a free society from having as coherent and unified a sense of direction as communities whose political life is based upon an infallible dogma. This is the political hazard in the moral virtue of a free society. It is a particularly grave hazard in international contests between alliances of free and dogmatic political systems. We must analyze this particular hazard more adequately presently.

Naturally, a free society that refuses to enthrone

any dogma has difficulty in refuting, or at least in suppressing dangerous competing dogmas. As a consequence, democratic progress toward a viable and just community is a tortuous one. It involves tolerance toward even the most pernicious political ideas, so long as they do not imperil the good order of the community too obviously and immediately, or so long as, in the words of Mr. Justice Holmes, they do not represent a "clear and present danger." This means that truth must be winnowed from falsehood by the tortuous and inexact empirical methods of entertaining or even applying false ideas about justice until experience has refuted them.

Free societies are not immune to civil strife if they are challenged to solve problems and adjudicate interests that are not within the ordinary range of democratic accommodation. Thus the American democracy became involved in a civil war when the democratic process proved unable to cope with the institution of slavery. Ironically, the westward conquest of the continent that would have made the institution economically unviable also aggravated the political issue between the slave-owning states and the abolitionists.

In the case of the American Civil War, a free society proved unable to eliminate an obvious form of injustice by democratic process. The modern controversy about integrated schools reveals the persistent difficulties in enforcing general standards of justice upon local communities that are governed by mores and customs derived from the standards of slavocracy. The moral achievements of free societies are not too brilliant, since the standards are inevitably drawn from the customary standards of the community and since the norms of justice are achieved by gradually accommodating rights to rights. The norms are therefore determined by the power and persistence of the competing forces.

"winnowing truth from error"

Yet it is surprising what the open societies of Western Europe have been able to accomplish within these limits. They have eliminated hereditary distinctions and functions, have established the principles of equality and liberty as regulative principles of justice, and have refuted the simple equalitarianism and libertarianism of the revolutionary movements, which regarded both liberty and equality as simple possibilities of justice.

Perhaps the most vivid example of the capacity of open societies to winnow truth from error by

the slow methods of trial and error is the capacity of Western European democracy to absorb, digest and partially reject both the extravagant determinism and individualism of classical economics and the extravagant voluntarism and collectivism of Marxist politics. The result has been a mixed economy and a balance of planning and freedom of individual enterprise that accurately mirrors in the political community the truth about the human situation in the whole of history. It is the discovery of the truth about this situation that we have defined as the ultimate virtue of an empirical and non-dogmatic approach to the political order.

In the process of winnowing truth from error through common experience, it would be difficult to decide whether the worst errors have been due merely to finite intelligence and parochialism or to the pretension of having overcome parochialism. Local prejudice, monstrous ambitions of classes and individuals, pretentious philosophies of history and of politics have all been thrown into the threshers of historical experience, where the wheat has been separated from the chaff.

Modern democracies, significantly, have not and could not eliminate the residual ideological distortions of the competing conceptions of justice in the business community and among the industrial workers. Therefore, all Western democracies have taken it for granted that classes which lack security in the hazards of a technical civilization will be more intent on social security than on liberty, while the classes that have the security either of property or of native talent will be more interested in liberty than in security. They have stabilized a free society by institutionalizing this perpetual debate and assuming that neither side will win an overwhelming victory, and that it is not in the interest of the community that either side should.

Lack of Unifying Purpose

But one embarrassment remains if one extols, as one must, the virtues of a non-dogmatic and free political system for the future of mankind as a whole. The obvious virtue of preventing the abortive effort to press the whole of human history into a dogmatic mold becomes an embarrassing source of political and perhaps of moral weakness when one seeks to define the consistent and unifying purpose of either a nation or of an alliance of free nations.

In America we have sought to hide the con-

fusion of cross-purposes, which are the very stuff of the life of a free society, by harking back to the original purposes of our founders. Those original purposes were to establish a democratic society for ourselves and the missionary purpose of propagating democracy in the whole world. But this remains a valid purpose only if one regards free institutions as self-justifying and self-validating values. If our previous analyses have any validity, the obvious virtues of democratic institutions in preventing a monopoly of power from arising and in arbitrating competing interests without violence cannot wholly compensate for the defect that a democratic nation lacks a clear and unifying conception of its mission or its destiny. It may have such a conception at given moments of crisis, but usually only after the pressure of historical perils and possibilities has created these unifying concepts. Thus in World Wars I and II our nation did not lack unity once we were committed by historical contingencies to our task. But we found it difficult to come to an agreement on our international purpose until events had foreclosed all but one alternative.

The lack of a continuing unifying purpose in a democratic community is an embarrassing defect in an approach to history whose chief characteristic is a modest disavowal of omniscience about future historical contingencies. There is, of course, always the unity drawn from devotion to the national interest—when historical circumstances clearly define the interest of the nation. This is the situation most obviously when the nation faces a clear and present danger. Hence in all democracies there is a passionate sense of unity in wartime, which sometimes even suggests that war experiences are of themselves redemptive.

There is a moral hazard in the unity achieved through devotion to the interests of the nation. Democracies in particular have the firm conviction that "Patriotism is not enough." They seek to invest the national cause with values that transcend the interests of the nation. This tendency leads to a considerable degree of hypocrisy and self-deception, for nations, as nations, are not as consistently devoted to purposes transcending their interests as sensitive citizens of the nation find it necessary to believe. All democratic nations face, in fact, the peculiar moral embarrassment that they cannot go to war without a clear threat to the national interest, and that they cannot continue the war without avowing a value transcending the national interest.

The first necessity arises from the fact that

democracies are reluctant to go to war, and the hesitant minority must be convinced that the peril to the nation is inexorable. The second necessity arises from the fact that a consistent pursuit of the interests of the nation will not satisfy the long run moral passions of the citizens of the nation.

The Cross-Purposes of Freedom

The most obvious solution for this dilemma is a real or pretended loyalty to a common civilization or an overarching value greater than that of national survival. In the present instance, this is the survival of a common civilization. But since the non-Communist cause embraces more than Western civilization, we generally define the overarching value as the survival of free governments. Since the capacity for self-government is not universal, we have suggested that the really compelling universal cause is the survival of an attitude toward the whole historical process that precludes a dogmatic restriction upon all the historical vitalities and possibilities.

But even such a cause must be embodied in a political or international alliance. Such an alliance is subject, even more than individual nations, to the confusion and cross-purposes of freedom. The sense of a national purpose which is, as we have seen, the minimal unifying force of nations, is a source of confusion in an alliance. For each nation, even when devoted to a common cause, has its own conception of that common cause, drawn from its peculiar history and experience. The most intimate wartime alliance between Britain and America was not able to overcome the tension arising from the fact that Britain was involved in an imperial venture in the 19th century while we were dogmatic anti-imperialists. Our wartime alliance with the Russians, inspired by the common peril of Nazi aggression, was so minimal that we could state our common cause only in minimal and negative terms. The very dangerous formula of "unconditional surrender" was the consequence of this embarrassment.

At the present time, the difficulties of France in extricating herself from her imperial experience in Algeria cannot be understood in their full and tragic dimensions in America. In the mind of France, her efforts prevent the spread of communism in Africa, while from our perspective they seem to aggravate the Communist peril.

The tensions and misunderstandings between America and Britain and between America and

France are the most obvious hazards to the alliance of free nations. But many more must be added to the category of cross-purposes and conflicts of national interest among nations who are equally loyal to a comprehensive value, an overarching civilization and a common political ideal. Germany, only recently our foe and now a loyal member of the alliance, is naturally interested in the reunification of the nation and might possibly be tempted to pursue that end even if it imperilled the other purposes of the alliance. On the other hand, Germany is more resolute, not to say intransigent, in its opposition to communism. She might not conform to any agreements intended to avoid or reduce the dimension of a nuclear war.

Naturally, the points of tension, competition and possible sources of confusion are even greater among the non-European nations, who are, in many instances, not even our explicit allies, though many of them are—like India—devoted either to the democratic ideal or at least to the preservation of national independence against the threat of any new imperialism. National independence and technical and industrial competence are, in fact, the two most fervently desired national goals of all non-European nations. The first goal is easily compatible with any collective purpose of frustrating the ambition of a dogmatic system to coerce all of history into its dogmatic mold.

The second purpose may persuade and tempt the so-called uncommitted nations either to espouse, or to flirt with, the Communist system, hoping that it has a quicker and more efficacious road to the accumulation of industrial capital and the acquisition of technical competence than Western civilization, particularly Western capitalism.

It may be a consolation to us that the cross-purposes occasioned by competing national interests and perspectives are not confined to the democratic world. The points of tension between Russian and Chinese national interests are becoming more obvious as China develops the power to challenge the Russian interpretation and direction of a common dogmatic political system. Nevertheless, the power of the dogma is great enough to obscure, if not to suppress, these cross-purposes. The obvious friction has been officially suppressed, but it may become more open in the future. In that case, it might suggest that the inexorable facts of a complex historical process may dissolve the power of the dogma, at least on the level of national rivalry.

Yet these consoling facts cannot completely obscure the great difference between international systems based upon a common dogma and those alliances or ententes that have no common purpose but the desire to avoid coercion into a dogmatic mold that would destroy some unique vitality, sacrifice some cherished ambition or suppress some vital interest of the nations.

The Need for a Wise Statecraft

The so-called "free world" is therefore under the necessity of defending what seems a very abstract, or at least a not very easily appreciated ultimate virtue at the price of the political hazards of allowing considerable political confusion, as an inevitable by-product of a modest refusal to coerce the nations into a dogmatic form of international cohesion.

Such a possibility can be made politically tenable only if a wise statecraft, particularly on the part of the hegemonous nation or nations, eliminates the confusion as much as possible. Such a statecraft must approximate the adjustment and arbitration of conflicting and competing interests that is the prerequisite of stability in democratic domestic politics. The democratic nations have long traditions of accommodation that prove it to be not impossible to adjust conflicts of interest and to achieve a minimal unifying purpose transcending these conflicts.

But it is obvious that on the international level the problem is more acute. There are only minimal constitutional instruments for these arbitrations and adjustments. The hegemonous nation in the alliance is forced to assume the role of the organizing center and instrument of will of the alliance, without having adequate instruments for gauging the will of the lesser powers. These lesser powers in turn lack adequate constitutional tools for restraining the hegemonous power from exploiting its position to gain its own advantage rather than the common good of the alliance.

The United Nations may be a constitutional instrument of this kind in embryo. But since its primary purpose is to be a minimal bridge of community between all the nations, it cannot serve as a constitutional instrument for the non-Communist alliance of nations. The constant insistence of previous American policy that the UN is a kind of world government in embryo merely served to reveal, more than to hide, our own lack of initiative. The simple fact is that a nation with great economic and military power must make use

of that power in the interest of the alliance. No countervailing power, but merely world opinion, will serve to restrain it from any undue regard for its own interests, where these are not in complete congruence with the common interest.

Yet the real test of the ability of an hegemonous power to approximate the justice of a constitutional domestic order is when the common interest must prompt it to put pressure upon the policy of a weaker nation in the alliance. In such a situation, it cannot hesitate to bring the pressure, but it must exhaust every ingenuity of statecraft to hide the pressure as much as possible and to take no action until every form of dialogue between the hegemonous power and the recalcitrant ally has been exhausted.

The problems of France with Algeria are an interesting case in point. The inability of France to conciliate the budding nation of Algeria is obviously a threat to the prestige and strategy of the free world. France believes, perhaps rightly, that a completely free Algeria will drift into the Communist camp. The other democracies fear, also perhaps rightly, that a prolonged struggle might force the Algerian nationalist movement to embrace communism. We have been so circumspect on this issue in the innumerable UN votes, by refraining from voting against France, that we have compromised our cause with the budding nations of Africa.

Fortunately, de Gaulle's resolute policy, which offers the only hope of a viable solution, now gives us the opportunity to give him discreet support against the French Right and Left, and simultaneously to seek to influence the Algerian nationalists to negotiate with de Gaulle until a solution is found. Such oblique and indirect assertions of prestige and power are absolutely essential in establishing a minimal unity and ideological neatness in the cause of the non-Communist nations.

The rather hazardous assertion of the power and prestige of the hegemonous nations, in the interest of establishing minimal unity among the free nations, is naturally not a perfect substitute for a constitutional system that would provide the centralization of authority by which order is secured, and the checks and balances by which justice is advanced. But since such a constitutional order is beyond present historical possibilities, we must exploit present political resources rather than dream of ideal but unattainable possibilities.

The persistent tendency of liberal opinion to

regard the UN as a constitutional order in embryo is derived, not from a sober analysis of international realities, but from the dogmas of the liberal world view. A more perfect constitutional order than that of the United Nations is beyond the present possibilities because constitutions cannot create the minimal community upon which they are reared and which they are capable of perfecting.

There is, of course, always the possibility of the growth of minimal community through the common tasks of the nations of the free world. There is also the possibility of a minimal community of mutual trust growing out of the situation of mutual fear of annihilation, which binds even the most resolute foes together in a nuclear age. The UN could be the scaffolding of such minimal forms of community. It can hardly be the scaffolding of a constitutional system that must presuppose community.

The Hazards of the Human Situation

If the political handicaps resulting from a non-dogmatic approach to the problems of an alliance of free nations seem too great to promise the prosperity and ultimate victory of political freedom over dogmatism, it is necessary to recall that these hazards are not due to ignorance or lack of foresight. They merely correspond to the basic human situation, to the inexorable condition of man in relation to the historical process. He is not omniscient or omnipotent enough to coerce history absolutely. Yet he has sufficient freedom over the process to conceive ends and goals that are not absolutely determined by the historical stuff which lies at the hands of a resolute statecraft. This means that a democratic international policy must exhaust all possibilities in overcoming the parochialism of nations without forgetting the parochialism of the perspective of the nation that has the power to contrive a unity of policy.

Thus our historic predicament, and the dimension of both the opportunities and the limits of political contrivance, merely illustrate the moral stake that mankind has in the cause of freedom as it is embattled with pretentious political schemes that defy the finite limits of the human situation. That moral stake is the preservation of a sober, rather than a pretentious political order, which conforms to both the relative freedom of man as creator of history and to the limits of his knowledge as a creature in the process in which he is a partial creator.

While the political hazards are so great as to make victory of the democratic cause seem dubious, we can gain consolation from the fact that, if a dogmatic political system is resisted, so that it will not usurp all the centers of power and prestige, the multiple and variegated facts of history are bound ultimately to refute the pretensions of the class and the nation that seek to coerce all of history into a mold that was parochially conceived at a particular time and place and by men with peculiar interests and passions. The great drama of history, with all its themes and patterns, with all its acts and scenes, is bound to refute the handiwork of pretentious dramatists and scene-shifters who have conceived some absurd little pattern for a drama too complex to be comprehended even in retrospect, and certainly too unpredictable to be comprehended in prospect.

We are in a contest, in short, not merely for the sake of preserving a free political order but for the much larger purpose of regulating the relation of men to their historical responsibilities in terms that will not violate the essential condition of human nature.

No one can obscure the political hazards of holding fast to the moral virtues of a modest political program that is in accord with the very nature of man as an historical creature and creator. It has the additional virtue that such a combination of resistance and modesty gives the world the one opportunity of beguiling the dogmatic foe into the community of reasonable men. The foe is human and not demonic. He is informed by a creed with demonic pretensions. If not resisted, these unchallenged pretensions will grow. If resisted, the opportunity is given for the common experience of history to dissolve and refute pretentious dogmas that have prematurely dug channels for historic vitalities not capable of containing the oceans of historic vitality or of regulating their tides and seasons.

Communities are built by many forms of mutual trust, some of them conscious and others unconscious. The world community cannot be built, initially, on mutual trust. The mutual fear of the nations involved in the nuclear dilemma is too potent. To preach mutual trust is vain in a situation in which historic facts create mutual fear. But there is a possibility that a stabilized situation of mutual fear, in which the resistance to political dogma prevents the premature victory of that dogma, may finally create a community of common responsibility toward the future of mankind.

If this community should not be torn asunder

by war, it might finally become a community in which the former adversaries recognize their common humanity, are reconciled to their lack of omniscience and omnipotence, and realize that all forms of historic creativity are limited by the finite

perspective of human agents.

Our modern task is to escape the hell of mutual annihilation while exorcizing the false heaven of the utopian creeds. Fortunately, the two tasks are not as incompatible as they seem.

A Familiar Asian Problem: Nationalism vs. Indigenous Communal Traditions

Emerging Nationhood in Ceylon

M. M. THOMAS

THE PROBLEM of continuity and discontinuity between the Christian gospel and the non-Christian religions has long been debated in theological circles. There is, however, a not dissimilar problem in politics, namely of the continuity and discontinuity between modern democratic nationalism and indigenous communal traditions of Asian countries. This has been an unsolved problem ever since the impact of Western liberalism produced in Asia an educated elite with a new sense of nationhood and committed to democracy. It has become more acute today as the national leadership of politically independent countries is engaged in the process of nation-building.

The history of nationalism and the present national situation in different countries of Asia illuminate the nature of the problems of the relation between nationalism and communalism and can help to evaluate the solutions attempted. In this article I shall deal with the problems of nationalism vs. indigenous communal traditions as it has presented itself in the emerging nationhood of Ceylon.

The early phase of the national movement in Ceylon was marked by the growth of the National Congress, a truly interracial and united effort led by and largely confined to the Sinhalese, Tamils and Burghers, who were educated in the English language. They were proud of the inspiration they derived from their Westernized education. While they had a genuine desire to understand and use what was best in national culture, on the whole they assumed the necessity of parliamentary institutions based on a Western educated electorate, which at that time was no more than a small segment of the middle class. This era produced some great leaders, who as one writer put it, "spoke on behalf of the mass of people, but lived as only a few privileged among them could live in a Western spiritual milieu, with integrity and in some cases great luxury."

At this time, the upper tenth sent their sons and daughters to England for education, and they joined the political and economic elite when they

returned. The urban Sinhalese of this period spoke English not only in society outside but also within the intimate family circle. The Tamils of course kept on using Tamil in the family. Generally, however, the national leaders were so Westernized in life and thought that they ignored the indigenous religious, cultural and linguistic (*swadeshi* and *swabhasha*) traditions as of no significance to the development of nationhood and democracy in the country. Indeed, one might speak of their standing for the radical displacement of indigenous culture by the Western, as they thought that Westernization would provide the only foundation for the new multi-racial, multi-religious nation, society and state they visualized in Ceylon.

Incidentally, Christianity itself was seen to be part of the Western culture, and Christians themselves (nine per cent of the total population) were in a very privileged position—they had a near-monopoly in the management of educational institutions. As in many other lands of Asia, many conversions to Christianity were "cultural" rather than religious.

One feature of the attainment of political independence by Ceylon was that it was preceded by no significant national struggle. It is the common observation of Ceylonese historians that Ceylon gained independence largely because of the influence of the Gandhi- and Nehru-led national movement of India, the postwar world situation and British Labor Party policies. Whatever the truth of this, the national movement in Ceylon did not become a mass movement as in India. This was unfortunate, for a mass struggle would have compelled the leadership to woo the masses and recognize the value of the *swadeshi* and *swabhasha* cultural movements in the process.

As it was, the only equivalent that emerged before Independence was the Marxian socialist movement expressing itself in Trotskyite and Communist parties. Their influence was also largely in the cities, primarily among the industrial workers and to a lesser extent the plantation workers. They built a powerful trade union movement. But as Marxists they, too, were oriented culturally to the West and had no sense of the significance of indigenous traditions. They, too, believed in radical displacement of indigenous culture by the technical culture of the West and

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were divorced from the indigenous sources of culture, which were largely rural.

In 1948, power was transferred by Britain to the United Nationalist Party (U.N.P.). The U.N.P., which had been the governing party for eight years after Independence under the leadership of D. S. Senanayake, his son Dudley Senanayake and lastly Sir John Kotalawala, in general may be said to represent the tradition of Westernized liberal nationalism. Of course in their ideologies and policies they were prepared to adjust themselves to certain demands of Marxist groups and the rising spirit of Sinhalese communalism, but their basic approach was to favor the promotion of the Western cultural milieu in the country and to preserve the rule by the elite of the Western educated over the masses.

Even after independence this tradition of liberal nationalism was so entrenched that Sir Ivor Jennings thought Ceylon was almost a replica of Britain and did not think that Ceylon ever would need a preamble to its Constitution setting out the goals of the nation or a written law of the fundamental rights of the human person that would be guarded by the judiciary. Ceylon has suffered a great deal for lack of these in recent years. I notice from Alan Paton's speech published in the Dec. 26, 1960 issue of *Christianity and Crisis* that Britain made the same mistake in South Africa.

The events of the last five years in Ceylon are the story of the militant revolt of the rural masses with their indigenous cultural and communal traditions against the policy of Westernization, which is represented as a policy of betrayal and suppression of national culture. It was symbolized by the rise to power of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike. A Sinhalese Christian of a rich family brought up in the ways of a very conservative landed aristocracy, Bandaranaike on his return from England after an Oxford education sought to identify himself with the "common man" both by changing his religion and his dress.

His appeal was to religious and cultural traditions of Sinhalese Buddhists, and the interests of four *swabhasha* groups powerful in the villages: the Buddhist monks, Ayurvedic physicians, the vernacular school teachers and the Sinhalese senior qualified young people who were swelling the ranks of the unemployed. Aided by these elements of the cultural and political Buddhist revival and the demands of the Sinhalese Buddhist Congress to redress the evils of four centuries of Western power and of the domination of Western language and religion, Bandaranaike unexpectedly won his victory over the U.N.P. in the general elections of 1956.

When Bandaranaike set out his policy of using the power of the Government to reinstate the Buddhist religion, the Sinhalese language and the Sinhalese race to their rightful place in Ceylon, the rural masses felt a sense of freedom and dignity unknown before. They, therefore, speak of the

Revolution of 1956 and of Bandaranaike's New Order.

The "New Order" has released new creative cultural forces in the country and enhanced the sense of selfhood of the majority of Sinhalese people. In this light, it is a real contribution to nationhood. But it has led also to the exclusive claim of the Sinhalese majority that the Ceylonese nationhood should be built on one religion (Buddhism), one language (Sinhalese) and one race (Sinhalese).

This identification of Ceylon's nationhood with the Sinhalese has roused the minority religions and communities—especially the Ceylon Tamils who form the major community in the southern provinces of the island—with respect to the legitimate status of the Hindu religion, Tamil language and Tamil culture. This has increased the hold of the Tamil Federal Party, which stands for the political autonomy of predominantly Tamil religions. In some quarters, this has led to the extremist ideology of "two nations" and two sovereign nation-states.

The Bandaranaike-Chelvaratnam agreement of 1957 was Bandaranaike's attempt to meet the reasonable demands of the Tamils in the name of a common nationhood. But it was torpedoed by the Buddhist monks. The manner in which some powerful and disorderly extremist groups among the majority Sinhalese behaved when the Sinhalese Only Act was to be implemented provoked a reaction among Tamils who began a movement of civil disobedience to meet their rights. So communal harmony was disturbed and in 1958 the communal riots took place. Bandaranaike himself was perhaps too slow to realize that he had released forces that he himself could not control. And these very forces sadly, but seemingly inevitably, put an end to his own life of service to the country.

After the assassination of Bandaranaike, there was a period when the caretaker government of Dahanayake and afterwards the short-lived government of Dudley Senanayake ruled the country. But the July 1960 elections brought Mrs. Bandaranaike to power with fuller support of the Sinhalese people than ever before. This Government has taken over the schools and thus brought an end to the power of Christians, especially the Roman Catholics, in education. It set itself the task of *swabhasha* and *swadeshi* education; it is also committed to take over the main daily newspapers that have been continuously supporting the U.N.P. In seeking to implement the Sinhalese Only Act it has denied the legitimate rights of the use of Tamil as the language of the courts in the Tamil Provinces. Against this, the Federal Party started *Satyagraha* before the administrative offices and courts in the North, which the Government answered by declaring an emergency and outlawing the Federal Party.

Thus there is no doubt that the present uncritical revival of indigenous cultures and communal traditions are threatening to destroy the

sense of nationhood and national unity. This sense of nationhood has been the contribution of the Western-oriented national leaders, who by their disregard of indigenous traditions have produced their militant revolt. The pendulum has swung from one extreme to the other. The suppression of indigenous streams of culture was a betrayal of the essential national selfhood of Ceylon; their resurgence in exclusively separatist communalism is also betraying the idea of the new Ceylonese nation. It is also destroying democracy, which is not merely the rule of the majority but also the recognition of the rights of the minority and the human person.

Neither neglect of indigenous cultures nor their uncritical revival will help the emerging democracy and nationhood of Ceylon. What is needed is the transformation of the plurality of indigenous cultures with a view to building cultural roots for political democracy, national unity and economic growth. Are there any political parties that recognize this need? Many among the younger generation of Christians believe that the Trotskyite Lanka Sama Samaj Party (L.S.S.P.), which along with its emphasis on Marxian economics has recently developed a sensitiveness to cultural problems and also to the legitimate rights of the Tamils, may help develop within the various communities a sense of national community. It is too early to say whether this is a correct forecast. In any case, there is need for more fundamental thinking on the meaning of the nation and state in a country of self-conscious religious, linguistic and racial communities—if the present communal mood is not to end the destruction of the idea and reality of Ceylon as a united democratic nation.

A national Christian study conference recently considered the political and cultural problems of building a Ceylonese nation. Let me conclude by offering a few quotes from their statement. In the search for political structures ensuring national unity, the conference ruled out the "idea of a majority group dominating and ultimately absorbing minority races, religions and languages and cultures" as inhuman; it considers that the "division of the country into two sovereign states" is a reversal of the "course of the political administrative and economic development of the last 150 years," and is economically unrealistic. The report goes on to point out that while the political structure should ultimately recognize "only

individual as distinct from communal rights," in the interim there is need for it to recognize the composite character of the national community and the communities that constitute it; and it asks for a certain measure of devolution of autonomy to regional units that "correspond to areas that have a common cultural and linguistic bond." It adds: "That decentralization could be a means of preserving the linguistic and cultural identity of minorities without compromising the sovereign rights of the State was implicitly recognized in the Bandaranaike-Chelavayagam agreement of 1957."

At the cultural level the statement says: "The assistance of the individuality of person and community, the lack of a developed sense of nationhood among the people, the rapidity of social changes, giving no time for the emergence of rightful leadership gave rise to all kinds of internal tensions between the cultural streams, and yet we can look forward to a united Ceylonese nation democratically conceived, and hope for the development and eventual synthesis of its several cultures, and we believe that common effort in the development of the country with less insistence on our cultural differences will play an important part in the achievement of this end."

We can only hope for a positive answer to the question: Will Christianity in Ceylon, freed from its identification with both Western culture and communalism, provide the principle of evaluation, discrimination and humanization of all cultural streams in the country?

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